

CONFIDENTIAL

9 April 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Richard Lehman, Director, Office of
Current Intelligence

THROUGH : [REDACTED] Chief, Research Staff 25X1A

SUBJECT : The Future Role of the NIS in OCI Activity

Of the future of the NIS itself, it is for Jack King to speak. But whatever form the NIS takes, it is hard to imagine it without a substantial political section and almost equally hard to imagine this section being produced without OCI's assistance. And if OCI is to play its NIS role more effectively than in the past, there are a number of points which its senior people might profitably consider. I venture some statements below--in general terms for wider discussion, with appended specifics in some instances primarily for your eyes--attempting in this statement the inherently difficult trick of combining the close-up experience of the past half-dozen years with the artificially detached point of view that might be found, say, in an inquiring staff member of PFIAB.

My general points on what the NIS needs in OCI can be indicated by the varied implications of one word: recognition. Viz:

1. Recognition of the validity of the basic government reference work as a category of intelligence with standards distinct on the one hand from those of current reporting and, on the other, from the analytical research paper which probes for new insights into power relationships.
2. Recognition that production of contributions to the principal government-wide reference work is a regular, budgeted part of OCI activity, not a semi-accidental response to a temporary administrative emergency.
3. Recognition that producing such¹ reference work requires adequate manpower, both qualitatively and quantitatively, and that cheese-paring in either respect is likely to cost the government more money in the end. (See Annex A on manpower requirements.)

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT: The Future Role of the NIS in OCI Activity

4. Recognition that the NIS's distinct standards and differing conditions of production (as regards such matters as long lead-times on scheduling and the fact that the end-product leaves the office laterally without coming to the attention of OCI's top command) necessitate special administrative arrangements to give such work effective equality of treatment in OCI--not just oral declaration; to the effect that NIS work already has it. (See Annex B on administrative arrangements.)
5. Recognition that the NIS is entering an innovative phase, not necessarily in what its products say (the kind of innovation OCI is habituated to look for) but in the way they say it--since basic intelligence, more than most kinds, is a problem of effective communication.
6. Recognition, correspondingly, of the need on OCI's part for flexibility regarding the NIS--a quality we have not always displayed in the past. (See Annex C for particulars.)

It will probably be said that all of the above points are already recognized in OCI, and in a sense this is true. But the statement is a bit reminiscent of those heard before World War II about the job rights of women and Negroes--that both groups were indubitably recognized as fully equal, and that all which could really be done for them was already being done or very shortly would be. The NIS's essential problem in OCI is not that of winning formal acknowledgment of a principle or principles, but of obtaining effective implementation--a complicated, undramatic business--of those principles in day-to-day operations.

25X1A

Deputy for NIS, Research Staff

Attachments:

- Annex A re manpower
- Annex B re administration
- Annex C re flexibility

-2-

CONFIDENTIAL

ANNEX A: Manpower requirements for NIS production

1. It is more profitable to start discussion of NIS manpower requirements on the qualitative than on the quantitative side. OCI has had analysts incapable of writing a good General Survey political section no matter how many hours they are assigned in which to do so, and their forced efforts in this direction have necessitated the work's being in part done over by higher priced talent and in part sent forward in patched-up form, to the cost (in non-financially-calculable terms) of the ultimate consumer and of OCI's reputation. Experience to date suggests that the skill needed for the NIS is by no means so rare as that needed for an analytical research paper that seeks to break new ground substantively--as the NIS does not--but considerably rarer than the ability to gist a cable with a brief comment. Much has been achieved by patient instruction on the initial production level and by flexibility in making NIS assignments (as discussed below), but it is expensively unrealistic to assume that all OCI analysts represent adequate NIS manpower.

2. On the quantitative side, the traditional rule-of-thumb has been three months each for a sociological section and a political section written by the same analyst, or four months each if written by different analysts. Various more detailed calculations have produced estimates both lower and higher than this; the most recent such estimate (and to me the most impressive because of its source) is one of only six weeks for a complete updating of a first-rate existing sociological section, and four months for a good analyst to produce such a section completely from scratch. It is wide variance of this sort (particularly at a time when the existing General Survey may well be on the threshold of extensive structural change) that inclines me to believe that the old rule-of-thumb figure is still the safest to continue using for overall manpower allocations--having in mind also that even the most expansive estimates of OCI's manpower expenditures on the NIS still fall considerably short of our manpower increment from the old NIS Research Division.

CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

ANNEX A: Manpower requirements for NIS production

3. Flexibility and imagination in making individual NIS assignments can make more efficient use of our manpower for this purpose than has always been done in the past. There is the question of incentives and general morale, discussed in Annex B below; there is the fact that a given analyst may do much better work on one aspect of the NIS than on another; there is also the more frequently observed fact that a particular analyst may produce quite a creditable NIS section at his own rather slow pace but may, in effect, go to pieces if held to a schedule suitable only for one of OCI's faster-working branch chiefs. And people can go stale and rigidified from an unrelieved diet of NIS production just as they can from too long and unvaried assignment to any other of an OCI analyst's tasks.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CONFIDENTIAL**Annex B: The administrative arrangements of NIS production**

1. A fundamental difficulty confronting NIS activity within OCI is that, though a markedly different kind of intelligence production from that of current reporting, it has to live within a context of administrative arrangements and working procedures designed for current intelligence before the NIS's arrival in OCI. Some of the practical differences this makes were set forth in greater detail in the third attachment (Annex C) to my long report of 23 July 1970 on OCI's Contribution to the NIS Program, a xerox of which annex is attached. Though the annex was mainly descriptive, the report itself argued that the NIS operation could not have the status it needs in OCI merely by oral pronouncement but required certain administrative action to compensate for the difficulties described in the annex.

2. One point the report focused on particularly was office personnel policy as it affects the analyst whose work and talents are mainly NIS. The report argues that such an analyst is not really rated on the same competitive basis as his current intelligence colleague under the present system, whereby his end-product passes laterally out of the office without normally being seen by anyone higher in the direct chain of command than the analyst's branch chief. It suggests that promotion of an NIS analyst is thus based on no more solid knowledge of his actual performance than ^{the} fact of his NIS assignment, the endorsement of his division chief and perhaps a polite comment by a distant Embassy reviewer not too familiar with the NIS generally and necessarily ignorant of how much of the draft before him is the analyst's own work and how much that of subsequent revisers. Thus (as further argued in my memo of 13 January 1971 on OCI promotion procedures, xerox of which is attached) we do not have office-wide competition on NIS work in the sense this exists on current intelligence activity, and this has not been without its effects on analyst morale. It is the familiar story of it's not being enough for justice to be done, but it's needing to be manifestly seen that justice is done; I would be prepared to mention the names of several people who are at least reputed to have received promotions for NIS work that their peers in the field would regard as below standard rather than above.

3. The recommendation for remedial action in the personnel field, made last summer and repeated now, is that on Fitness Reports of a regional division's NIS officer and its branch chiefs, the DD/OCI (or other front office reviewing officer) ask for the views of Res/NIS on

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL**Annex B: The administrative arrangements of NIS production**

the NIS performance concerned before giving his judgment. A similar procedure would be followed before a promotion action on anyone with substantial NIS responsibilities went to the Career Service Board. In both instances Res/NIS would be prepared, on request, to elicit competent OBGI views on comparative NIS performance.

4. Other administrative arrangements for NIS work seem to me to be quite secondary to those governing the critical matters of assigning competent personnel to the NIS job, seeing that they are given sufficient time to do it, and seeing that they are suitably rewarded when they do it well. The system of divisional R.O. officers for NIS production seems to me an inherently good one, which works well when these critical matters are satisfactorily taken care of (i.e. when the incumbent is skilled and energetic and has adequate division-office support at all stages in the process) but cannot produce good results when these factors are working against it. One example might drive this point home. It is generally agreed that NIS production on Africa has shown a marked improvement over the past year or so. Yet, except for a single year which he spent as chief of one of the Africa branches, [REDACTED] has been in charge of NIS production on Africa during the whole time it has been in OCI, and I would consider that he has become more skilled and energetic personally during this time but that the determining difference has been the support received in the matters indicated above from [REDACTED]

25X1A

25X1A

Attachments: (Xerox copies)
Annex C to report of 1/23/70
Memo of 1/13/71

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

ANNEX C: Flexibility and the NIS

1. It has been almost an article of faith in OCI that we are unfailingly flexible and the NIS is impossibly rigid. This is a judgment based more on the generally fast reaction-time of OCI synopses responding to sudden intelligence demands from Higher Authority than to sober analysis of the specific behavior of OCI personnel dealing with the NIS. I have no wish to question our general ability to be light on our feet, but OCI flexibility has not been too evident in such behavior as seeking postponements of interagency deadlines for OCI administrative reasons: delivering NIS drafts exactly on their internal deadlines irrespective of their condition; arguing with great dedication and ingenuity the letter of the law on NIS guidance outlines in endeavors to avoid revising OCI first drafts; calling for changes in NIS programming on an all-or-nothing basis when substantive developments compel adjustment in this programming. The case of the Cambodia General Survey is a current case in point, though not the only one that has arisen regarding a Southeast Asian country. There was probably emotional satisfaction gained in the Far East Division last summer from demanding ~~that~~ the Cambodia General Survey's postponement in toto and sine die, but the modified basis on which the Cambodia General Survey is now being completed is about the same as OBGI would have been willing to agree on at the time--the chief net differences in the situation being delay in meeting user demands for the book and the absence from FE Division of [REDACTED] who was available to work on it last summer.

25X1A

2. The main point, however, in recalling these past OCI lapses from flexibility is that the NIS now seems to stand on the threshold of extensive change and greatly increased flexibility will probably be needed from OCI. It is evident already that the desired new style of the General Survey's introductory section about a country will make new demands, both for a level of writing talent that we have not always applied to NIS work in the past and for more numerous and more radical revisions than the drafts of these introductory sections have previously received. We should be psychologically and administratively prepared for this.

CONFIDENTIAL